

WE CLAIM:

1. A method of identifying a plurality of information items associated with a computer application, comprising:
  - associating one or more set label components with the computer application;
  - 5 generating a plurality of local identifier components;
  - generating a plurality of identifiers by associating each of the plurality of local identifier components and the set label component; and
  - associating the plurality of identifiers with the plurality of information items.
- 10 2. The method of claim 1, wherein the plurality of local identifier components is sequentially generated.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein each of the plurality local identifier components is unique within a set label component.
4. The method of claim 1, wherein each of the identifiers uniquely identifies an information stream.
- 15 5. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
  - providing a status identifier component indicating a status of the identifier set; and
  - generating the plurality of identifiers by linking each of the plurality of local identifier components, the status identifier component, and the set label component.
- 20 6. The method of claim 5, wherein the status identifier component can indicate one of an active status or standby status.
7. The method of claim 1, wherein each of the plurality of local identifier components and the set label component comprise one or more binary bits.
8. The method of claim 1, wherein the plurality of identifiers are generated by attaching each of the local identifiers components to the set label components.

9. A method of distributing a plurality of information items to a distributed application having a plurality of computer application copies, comprising:

associating a plurality of set label components with the respective plurality of computer application copies;

5 associating a plurality of identifiers with the plurality of information items, each of the plurality of identifiers comprising one of the set label components and an identifier component local to an identifier set associated with the one set label component; and

distributing the plurality of information items to the plurality of computer application copies in accordance with the plurality of identifiers.

10 10. The method of claim 9, wherein each of the plurality of identifiers comprises a status identifier component indicating a status of one of the plurality of identifier sets.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein the status identifier component can indicate one of an active status or standby status.

12. The method of claim 9, wherein each of the plurality of identifiers uniquely identifies an information stream.

13. The method of claim 9, wherein each of the local identifier components is unique within the identifier set.

14. A method of transferring an identifier set from a first application copy to a second application copy in a distributed application, the identifier set being associated with a set label component, the set label component being associated with the first application copy, comprising:

transferring the association of the set label component from the first application copy to the second application copy; and

synchronizing information between the first application copy and the second application copy.

15. The method of claim 14, wherein the synchronization occurs during a time period while the identifier set is not available for normal operation.

16. The method of claim 15, wherein the time period while the identifier set is not available for normal operation comprises a period while the identifier set is being transferred from the first application copy to the second application copy.

5 17. The method of claim 14, wherein the information comprises a most recently used local identifier component value

18. An identifier for use in a distributed application having a plurality of application copies, comprising:

a set label component identifying a set of local identifier components, the set label component being associated with one of the plurality of application copies; and

10 a local identifier component within the set of local identifier components.

19. The identifier of claim 18, wherein the local identifier component is generated local to the one application copy.

20. The identifier of claim 18, further comprising a status identifier component identifying a status of the one identifier set.

15 21. The identifier of claim 20, wherein the status identifier component can indicate one of an active status or standby status.

22. The identifier of claim 18, wherein the local identifier component and the set label component comprise one or more binary bits.

20 23. A computer-usable medium comprising a sequence of instructions which, when executed by a processor, causes the processor to perform a method of identifying a plurality of information items associated with a computer application, comprising:

associating a set label component with the computer application;

generating a plurality of local identifier components;

25 generating a plurality of identifiers by associating each of the plurality of local identifier components and the set label component; and

associating the plurality of identifiers with the plurality of information items.

24. The computer-usable medium of claim 23, wherein the plurality of local identifier components is sequentially generated.

25. The computer-usable medium of claim 23, wherein each of the plurality of local identifier components is unique.

5 26. The computer-usable medium of claim 23, wherein each of the identifiers uniquely identifies an information stream.

27. The computer-usable medium of claim 23, further comprising:

providing a status identifier component indicating a status of the identifier set; and

generating the plurality of identifiers by linking each of the plurality of local identifier components, the status identifier component, and the set label component.

28. The computer-usable medium of claim 27, wherein the status identifier component can indicate one of an active status or standby status.

29. The computer-usable medium of claim 23, wherein each of the plurality of local identifier components and the set label component comprise one or more binary bits

30. The computer-usable medium of claim 23, wherein the plurality of identifiers are generated by attaching each of the local identifiers components to the set label component.

31. A computer-usable medium comprising a sequence of instructions which, when executed by a processor, causes the processor to perform a method of distributing a plurality of information items to a distributed application having a plurality of computer application copies, comprising:

20 associating a plurality of set label components with the respective plurality of computer application copies;

associating a plurality of identifiers with the plurality of information items, each of the plurality of identifiers comprising one of the set label components and an identifier component local to an identifier set associated with the one set label component; and

25 distributing the plurality of information items to the plurality of computer application copies in accordance with the plurality of identifiers.

32. The computer-usable medium of claim 31, wherein each of the plurality of identifiers comprises a status identifier component indicating a status of one of the plurality of identifier sets.

33. The computer-usable medium of claim 32, wherein the status identifier component can indicate one of an active status or standby status.

34. The computer-usable medium of claim 31, wherein each of the plurality of identifiers uniquely identifies an information stream.

35. The computer-usable medium of claim 31, wherein each of the local identifier components is unique within the identifier set.

36. A computer-usable medium comprising a sequence of instructions which, when executed by a processor, causes the processor to perform a method of transferring an identifier set from a first application copy to a second application copy in a distributed application, the identifier set being associated with a set label component, the set label component being associated with the first application copy, comprising:

transferring the association of the set label component from the first application copy to the second application copy; and

synchronizing information between the first application copy and the second application copy.

37. The computer-usable medium of claim 36, wherein the synchronization occurs during a time period while the identifier set is not available for normal operation.

38. The computer-usable medium of claim 37, wherein the time period while the identifier set is not available for normal operation comprises a period while the identifier set is being transferred from the first application copy to the second application copy.

39. The computer-usable medium of claim 36, wherein the information comprises a most recently used local identifier component value.